

# Clock ticking on partial state shutdown

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Seattle Crosscut  
June 16, 2015



*The Washington State Capitol Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)*

The two-week clock has begun on whether Washington's government will partly shut down on July 1.

Republican and Democratic budget negotiators met for five minutes Tuesday morning in Gov. Jay Inslee's conference room, and then left tight-lipped, declining to talk with reporters.

Inslee spokesman David Postman said the governor is optimistic that the deadlocked negotiations will be resolved prior to June 30. "He does not believe the government will be shut down. The consequences are too great. We have history on our side," Postman said.

Today's situation echoes what happened in 2013 when both sides butted heads on the 2013-2015 budget. Back then, they did not reach an agreement until June 27 — three days before the final deadline. This year, the most recent public stances of the Republicans and Democrats had the GOP proposing a \$37.9 billion two-year budget with lots of borrowing and budget shifts, and the Democrats proposing a \$38.4 billion

budget bolstered by a 5 percent capital gains tax on Washington's highest investment earners.

The state government has identified what will be shut down on July 1 if no 2015-2017 budget agreement is reached by June 30. In fact, officials mostly dusted off its 2013 partial shutdown plan and tweaked it. The broad strokes are outlined on the [Washington Office of Financial Management's Web site](#). Warning notices will go to the affected state employees next Tuesday. Here are some highlights of what a partial shutdown would set into motion.

The state's universities and community colleges won't shut down, but the work to process need-based grants for students in the fall would be put on hold. Also, universities and students won't find out the status of other state financial aid to students.

Partial shutdowns in health and social services would lead to cutting off numerous programs for children, seniors, mental health patients, developmentally disabled people and those needing vocational rehabilitation. Investigations into misconduct in the health professions would stop, except in extreme cases. Many food and nutrition programs would close down, which could eventually jeopardize federal nutrition funding.

Several Department of Corrections functions would halt, with the most obvious result being new offenders slated for transfer to state prisons being kept in county jails. Much of the commerce, ecology and fish and wildlife departments would shut down, along with the bulk of the attorney general's office. New applications for workers compensation benefits wouldn't be processed.

The state lottery and the Emerald Downs racetrack would close. Most licensing activities would halt. And the state's sending of money to local governments would be affected.

So far, the Legislature has never failed to meet a biennial budget agreement deadline.

But in 2013, a then-new cast of leaders flirted dangerously close to partly shutting down the state government. And this year's encore with roughly the same people is pushing that envelope again.

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